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Articles in Today's Clips Tuesday, May 8, 2007

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05/08/2007

Accused biter runs day care

Home-based business is under investigation

BY SHERI MCWHIRTER

smcwhirter@record-eagle.com

GAYLORD — A Gaylord school bus driver accused of biting two middle school girls in separate instances also runs a home-based day care now under investigation by state officials.

Patricia Lynn Lawes, 44, was put on administrative leave last week pending an internal investigation by officials at Gaylord Community Schools. Digital video footage from the bus is being reviewed and the driver could be fired by school trustees, something they could consider at a meeting next week.

Police were notified of the alleged assaults.

Lawes recently was transferred to drive another bus route after being reprimanded for speaking inappropriately to students, said school Superintendent Cheryl Wojtas.

Lawes has a clean driving record and has been licensed to operate a school bus since September 1998, said Fred Woodhams of the Michigan Secretary of State's Office.

The alleged biting incidents may have prompted state officials to launch an investigation into Lawes' day care center on Fisher Road, said Maureen Sorbert, spokeswoman for the state Department of Human Services. She declined to release details of the current probe.

Lawes can still baby-sit up to six children at her home business seven days a week, but the investigation could change that, Sorbert said.

Lawes could not be reached for comment at phone numbers listed in public records.

According to state documents, her day care center failed an inspection in 2002. Violations included hazardous items accessible to children, supervision concerns in a backyard fort, swimming safety, fire extinguisher labeling and the need for child CPR and first aid training. There was also no written emergency evacuation plan, among other violations, records show.

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- [Driver allegedly bites kids](#) - May 5, 2007



To catch online predators, cops think like teens

Tuesday, May 08, 2007

By John Tunison

The Grand Rapids Press

HOLLAND -- Detective Jeff Pauli has a knack for acting like a 13-year-old girl.

He knows the pop culture -- the music, the clothes, the school scene.

And he uses that knowledge to his advantage to help catch Internet sexual predators, stopping them before they assault vulnerable teens. Pauli, a Monroe County sheriff's detective assigned to the State Police Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force, often portrays himself in Internet chat rooms as a girl age 13 or 14.

The job isn't easy, but it's also "not brain surgery," Pauli says. "It's learning the way they talk online, the abbreviations they use and spelling things wrong."

Sometimes, he has to deal with men transmitting naked photos of themselves or performing lewd acts on Web cams.

"It's not the best part of the job, let's put it that way," he said.

Pauli gathered the Web evidence to arrest former Holland Calvary Schools soccer coach Kevin Wolters, 35, who allegedly was using his home computer to chat online with someone he thought was a 14-year-old Livonia girl. Wolters faces trial on charges of using a computer to accost a child for immoral purposes and using a computer to disseminate sexually explicit material to a minor.

Police who pose as young teens to catch predators say the job can be distasteful, especially when men send graphic images.

Macomb County sheriff's Sgt. Tina Old, part of the Macomb Area Computer Enforcement Team, often uses a simple trick to block Web-cam pictures.

"I stick a little Post-it note on the obscene part and just keep chatting," she said.

Wolters also allegedly had an ongoing conversation with an undercover detective with the Macomb team, also posing as a young teen, and Wolters also faces charges there.

Kentwood police Detective Gerald McCarthy, who sometimes works on-line to hunt predators, said detectives can learn a lot by reading teen blogs on social networking sites, such as MySpace, Facebook, Bebo and others.

"You have to keep up with what a 13-year-old likes," he said.

McCarthy said detectives may not initially know whether the suspected predator is telling the truth about themselves, particularly their age.

"You can be anyone you want to be on the Internet. That's the problem," he said. "You might think you're talking to a 14-year-old boy and it turns out you're talking to a 56-year-old guy."

Web detectives usually go through six weeks of training to learn the legalities of chatting online with potential suspects, staying away from anything that might be considered entrapment. They also learn guidelines established by the state police task force.

Part of the rules call for the detective to disclose their profile to the chatter, including their supposed age, sex and hometown. That way, the suspect can't argue he thought he was chatting with an adult.

Old said contacts with online chatters range anywhere from 15 minutes to eight or nine months. Some men end the conversation when they discover the age.

Part of the key to successfully duping a potential predator is learning the Web lingo and abbreviations that teens often use.

"You definitely have to do your research," Old said. "If someone is a true predator, they're going to know what the kids are into -- the music, the clothing, iPods, all that."

Police say one threshold for making an arrest is if a suspect begins arranging an in-person meeting for sex.

"They don't even have to show up," Old said. "We can pick them up right after that conversation."

In the Holland case, police say Wolters used a Web cam to transmit obscene images of himself and also talked about "different types of sex he wishes to have with this 14-year-old girl persona," according to court documents.

Wolters was a boys soccer coach at Calvary Schools for the past six years and an assistant coach before that, but is no longer under contract.

Calvary Schools Executive Director Paul Davis said school officials checked with students Wolters may have had contact with and found no evidence of any inappropriate activity.

Send e-mail to the author: jtunison@grpress.com

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Family clash leaves mom dead, daughter distraught

Of The Oakland Press

BLOOMFIELD TWP. A 58-year-old Bloomfield Township woman died early Monday after she either fell from or was knocked down by an SUV driven by her daughter in what appears to be an accident, according to police.

Bloomfield Township Police Chief Kirt Bowden said the woman apparently was trying to stop her 20-year-old daughter from leaving their house in the 1200 block of Lenox Road following an argument when the daughter accelerated a white Ford SUV in reverse to back out of the driveway. The Oakland County Medical Examiner's Office identified the mother as Rabia Deen.

Bowden said it's still unclear whether she fell from the passenger seat onto the ground, or whether the SUV's door knocked her down. She hit her head on the driveway and was pronounced dead at a local hospital. The medical examiner determined Deen died from blunt-force head trauma.

Bowden said there had been a family argument at the house involving the victim and her husband. The 20-year-old decided she had had enough and wanted to leave, Bowden said.

"There's no indication that she meant to injure anybody," Bowden said.

Bowden said police received a couple of 9-1-1 calls from the home that were disconnected, the first of which came at about 1 a.m. He said the caller had some communication with the dispatcher and there was a lot of background noise that indicated "people were excited."

Bowden said police talked briefly with the daughter, who is a student at the University of Michigan. He said she was extremely emotionally distraught and is sedated and under the care of professionals. Police hope to interview her as soon as possible.

"There are a lot of questions we have to answer," he said.

Bowden said officers were called to the house in 2005 in response to some sort of argument. No arrests were made. Further details about that incident were unavailable at press time.

Several hours after Monday's accident, streaks of orange spray paint marked the driveway and grass outside the brown brick house at Lenox and Kentmoor roads, in a neighborhood of well-manicured lawns east of Squirrel and south of Square Lake Road. A ribbon of yellow police tape sat at the base of a large tree.

One woman who identified herself as a neighbor but did not want to give her name said the family seemed nice.

"They've been very nice, very hospitable," she said.

Another neighbor who also didn't want to be identified, said she believed Deen and her husband both were doctors.

"I didn't see much of them," she said. "I would ask them who did their lawn, that type of thing. They seemed like wonderful people."

Staff writer Randal Yakey contributed to this report. Contact Ann Zaniewski at (248) 745-

ClickOnDetroit.com

Police: Woman Run Over By Vehicle Driven By Daughter

POSTED: 7:39 am EDT May 7, 2007
UPDATED: 7:00 pm EDT May 7, 2007

BLOOMFIELD TOWNSHIP, Mich. -- Bloomfield Township police are investigating the death of a woman who was run over by a car driven by her daughter on Monday, police said.

The incident occurred over the weekend at the 1200 Block of Lenox Road, when, police said, a daughter was arguing with her parents.

The daughter, Alicia Dean, 20, a medical student at the University of Michigan, stormed out of the home and got into her Ford Explorer. As she was backing out of the driveway, police said, her 58-year-old mother, Dr. Robin Dean, opened the passenger door and held onto it so her daughter wouldn't drive away.

When Alicia Dean drove off, Robin Dean fell to the ground and hit her head, police said.

Police added that they do not know what the argument was about.

When emergency crews arrived, they found the woman on the ground and transported her to a nearby hospital, where she was pronounced dead, according to Bloomfield Township police.

"Right now everyone is feeling a lot of pain, feeling lots of pain for the whole family," neighbor Rose Mary Leonard said.

Neighbors said the family of three has lived on Lenox Road for nearly 30 years. They said the husband and wife are doctors, and the daughter was a bright college student.

"I would see (the daughter) out there with her friends and all -- just normal people -- something you would never expect," Leonard said.

Police said they received at least one call regarding a domestic incident in the past, but it did not lead to any charges and arrests.

The daughter is in the hospital, traumatized, police said.

An investigation is under way, and at this time police said they don't think any charges will be filed, but that will be up to the prosecutor. Police said they do believe this was an accident and if there is a charge it will most likely be manslaughter.

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Video: Police: Woman Run Over By Own Daughter 5/07/07

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Pregnant woman killed by boyfriend, cops say

Tuesday, May 08, 2007

By Nate Reens

The Grand Rapids Press

GRAND RAPIDS -- Police said a pregnant single mother of two was stabbed to death by her boyfriend Monday inside a Southeast Side apartment.

Landlord Klaus Meine identified his tenant as Crystal Michael, a 28-year-old who was seven months pregnant with her third child. Michael moved into the 2163 Saginaw Road SE duplex Wednesday. The residence is off Breton Avenue SE, north of 28th Street.

"She was a nice lady and looked to be good to the children she had," Meine said. "I was looking forward to getting to know her and have a good relationship.

"Unfortunately, that's not going to happen. It's tragic."

Police refused to release the victim's name, but Grand Rapids police Lt. Paul Warwick said the woman's boyfriend confessed to the slaying and was in custody after surrendering to officers in Wyoming about 3:30 p.m.

Warwick would not identify the suspect, pending an arraignment today. He also refused to confirm the manner of the woman's death or say what might have sparked the violence.

Investigators said the suspect attacked the victim Monday afternoon then went to his mother's house in Wyoming, where he admitted to hurting the woman.

Wyoming police were contacted and officers sent the information to Grand Rapids authorities, Warwick said.

"(The suspect) made the disclosures there and the officer who went in the house found her deceased," Warwick said. "It appears this is a domestic violence situation."

Warwick said it appears the suspect killed the woman early Monday afternoon.

Michael's family and friends gathered Monday night at a Kentwood apartment, but declined to discuss her death.

The woman's children are in temporary care, Warwick said. It's unclear if the suspect is the father of the young boy and girl, who neighbors said are 6 and 4.

The children were at their day-care facility Monday when their mother was killed. Michael's neighbors said a bus pulled up to drop them off at the duplex as police were on the scene, and officers asked the driver to keep going.

"The kids were just looking out the window," said Anne Elliott, who lives next to Michael.

Michael worked as a part-time caregiver at Hope Network and Spectrum Home Care, Meine said.

Neighbors were stunned to see police swarming the duplex. Many said Michael and her children seemed

nice and would be a good addition to the street.

"Our world is so crazy, and you can't go and reverse something as sad as this," Elliott said. "That man should have just left and left her alone, whatever the trouble was.

"I don't know what clicks and makes someone go off like that."

Send e-mail to the author: nreens@grpress.com

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Published May 8, 2007

201 area people suspected of Social Security, other fraud

Ingham, Eaton counties lost \$332,500 to false claims, fed, local investigators say

Hugh Leach
Lansing State Journal

DELTA TWP. - Local, federal and state authorities say an investigation has turned up 201 cases of suspected fraud, mainly involving false Social Security claims, in Ingham and Eaton counties.

Charges have not been filed yet.

The results of the probe, announced Monday afternoon at a news conference at the Delta Township substation of the Eaton County Sheriff's Department, also involved false claims involving the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Michigan Department of Human Services.

The investigation was part of a joint effort in six Michigan counties that identified \$1.17 million in suspected fraud. In Eaton and Ingham counties, the total was nearly \$332,500.

Doug Lloyd, assistant Eaton County prosecuting attorney, headed up the investigation for both counties.

"We have a good working relationship with Eaton County," said Ingham County Prosecutor Stuart Dunning III.

"They already have an economic crimes unit, and it only made sense to have one assistant prosecutor speak for both counties."

Lloyd said no one has been charged in the cases, which are under review by his department.

Most of the cases involve people falsely claiming to have lost Social Security checks and obtaining replacements.

That, in effect, gave them double payments.

"About 90 to 95 percent of the people we have confronted about this have confessed," Lloyd said.

Repayment possible

Those who committed fraud will be able to escape criminal charges if they repay the money

What's Next

The fraud cases against 201 Ingham and Eaton county residents suspected of fraud involving Social Security, the Department of Housing and Urban Development and/or the Michigan Department of Human Services are under review by the Eaton County Economic Crimes Unit. Anyone charged in the case will have an opportunity to escape criminal prosecution by repaying the amount fraudulently received, plus a fee. Those who do not make the payment face a possible jail or prison term of nine months to 10 years, depending on the amount of the fraud.

defrauded, plus a fee.

Anyone who does not make the payment faces a possible jail or prison term of nine months to 10 years, depending on the amount of the fraud.

William Cotter Jr., special agent in charge of the Social Security Administration Office of the Inspector General, said investigations also took place in Berrien, Ottawa, Kalamazoo and Calhoun counties.

Other probes are under way in northern Ohio and Wisconsin.

Cotter called the cooperative effort among federal, state and local agencies "unprecedented."

'This is just greed'

Dunnings said the fraud appears to have nothing to do with Michigan's slow economy.

"This is just greed," he said.

"In these days of budget deficits, where there is fraud like this the answer is often to get rid of the program.

"In this case, we are trying to preserve programs for the many law-abiding citizens by getting rid of the people who abuse the system."

Contact Hugh Leach at 377-1119 or hleach@lsj.com.

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This is a printer friendly version of an article from **Lansing State Journal**. To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

Published May 7, 2007

Layoffs: State still stuck on issue of matching spending, revenue

A Lansing State Journal editorial

Large-scale layoffs of state workers and a partial government shutdown would be huge blows to Greater Lansing. As the state capital, Lansing is home to thousands of state employees and their families; layoffs will reverberate throughout the region's economy.

But, if the leaders of this state - acting on the preferences of those who elected them - cannot agree on a way to fund state government, layoffs become the inevitable result.

Gov. Jennifer Granholm's administration has begun preliminary work into the hows and the whos of layoffs and a shutdown. No doubt that is part political theater: Granholm is trying to pressure the Legislature to approve her tax and spending plans to close a massive 2007 budget gap.

The governor is trying to set a deadline and trap legislative Republicans against it.

But the larger question remains the same: Will Michigan raise the revenue to meet its spending commitments, or reduce its spending to meet its revenue?

The story of the 2007 budget deficit turns on that question, whether it involves cuts to school aid, local governments shorted state revenue sharing funds or, in this case, temporary reductions in the state work force.

To a frustrated taxpayer worried about job security and the economy, the prospect of state layoffs may appeal compared to state tax increases.

But layoffs are layoffs; they hurt the economy. Also, state workers have absorbed pay cuts before to help the state's continually beleaguered budget.

If Michigan chooses to close most government offices for a series of Fridays this year, is that really good for the state or for someone who just wants to renew a driver's license or get a new car title?

It is one thing for state leaders to engage in a detailed study of state government to identify efficiencies and reduce spending. It's quite another to rush around making layoffs because state leaders can't be bothered to get around a single table and broker a budget-rescue plan.

The former is wise government; the latter is elected disorganization.

If the state cannot find the money to operate government, than layoffs and shutdowns must come. That's not an endorsement, simply a statement of fact.

Voters, in mid-Michigan and out, need to consider if that's what they really want lawmakers to do.



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Granholm says she's running out of patience with Republicans

By Chad Selweski
Journal Register News Service

CLINTON TOWNSHIP -- Gov. Jennifer Granholm said Monday she is an increasingly agitated "gentle soul" who is running out of patience with Republican refusals to consider taxes as part of a budget compromise.

Speaking to a group of education officials and representatives of the health care industry, Granholm said she is looking to negotiate with GOP lawmakers for a solution to the state's \$700 million deficit. But she expressed no regrets for the sharp criticism she has directed at the Republican leadership for their no-taxes ideology.

"How long have I been a nice person? I mean, I've been very gentle throughout my entire years as governor. But at some point you have to draw the line," Granholm said later. "I'm a very gentle soul, but at some point you get frustrated because one side isn't compromising."

Republicans have said Granholm is the one showing stubbornness by refusing to drop taxes as part of the budget-balancing equation. Senate Majority Leader Mike Bishop, a Rochester Republican, has said broad tax hikes such as Granholm's proposed levy on services are a dead issue, with a lack of support even among the governor's Democratic allies in the Legislature.

The governor brought her budget message -- a mix of cuts, reforms and revenues -- to a gathering arranged for Granholm at the Macomb Intermediate School District administration building. School superintendents and health care providers urged the state not to follow through with cuts in education funding and Medicaid allocations for doctors and hospitals.

Last week, Granholm announced that if a budget agreement isn't reached by June 1, she would be forced to slash \$122 per pupil for K-12 schools and cut 6 percent from Medicaid services for the poor, elderly and disabled. Many of those on hand at Monday's forum seemed to agree that additional taxes are needed.

"We don't have an expenditure problem in Chippewa Valley, we have a revenue problem," said Superintendent Mark Deldin. "But we don't control the revenues."

Superintendents representing a variety of districts -- those with growing or shrinking enrollments -- told the governor about cuts, layoffs and building closures they have endured to keep their budgets under control. Some are depleting their "rain day" funds.

In New Haven, the tri-county area's smallest district with just 1,400 students, officials have struggled with budget deficits for more than a decade.

"Cutting \$122 per pupil is just going to throw me further into deficit," said Superintendent James Avery. "I don't know when we're going to come out of it."

Granholm also heard opposition to pending cuts for hospitals, mental health facilities and home health care companies. Critics say Medicaid cuts would reduce Michigan's federal funding, boost the number of uninsured, and reduce the number of doctors who serve Medicaid patients.

"We feel the 6 percent Medicaid cut is very shortsighted and will hurt the economy," said Barbara Rossman, CEO of the St. Joseph Mercy hospitals.

Fraser Mayor Marilyn Lane said additional reductions in state revenue sharing would hurt

municipalities' ability to provide "essential services" such as police and fire protection and garbage pickup. Macomb County communities, she said, have already been hit with about \$80 million in revenue cuts over the past four years.

State Rep. Kim Meltzer, a Clinton Township Republican who attended Monday's gathering, said the governor has resorted to marketing techniques by ignoring government's growing health care and pension costs while repeatedly calling for more "revenues."

"I told her that 'revenue enhancement' for you is a tax increase for me," said Meltzer, who opposes tax hikes.

A statewide poll released Sunday by Lansing-based EPIC/MRA found opposition to both an income tax increase and a sales tax on services to help close the budget gap. By a 51 percent to 30 percent margin, the sales tax on services was considered the more palatable of the two.

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http://www.dailytribune.com/stories/050807/loc_granholm001.shtml

Posted: 5-7-2007

Journalist's prediction: Shutdown of state government will be averted

'Off The Record's' Tim Skubick speaks to Mason County Democrats

STEVE BEGNOCHE - MANAGING EDITOR



TIM SKUBICK predicted a tax hike of some sort will be part of a solution to ongoing state budget talks.

A little over a week after Dick DeVos told Republicans in Ludington he would answer a call to run again if he was the right man for Michigan at the right time, the Mason County Democrats hosted a Lansing-based observer of the fall 2006 Michigan gubernatorial election.



Tim Skubick, moderator of public television's "Off The Record" political roundtable show produced in Lansing and the self-proclaimed dean of capital correspondents, has been covering the state capital beat for about four decades. He wrote "See Dick and Jen Run," during the campaign which saw Gov. Jennifer [Granholtz](#) defeat DeVos to win a second term. It was published and on shelves in time for Christmas.

Skubick sold all the copies he brought Sunday to the Stearns Motor Inn in downtown Ludington where about 60 Democrats filled the refurbished ballroom, sampling desserts, awaiting Skubick's talk. During his 50-minute presentation, Skubick shared insights into the 2006 campaign and into the ongoing budget process that has preoccupied the governor and lawmakers since the election.

In no particular order, Skubick observed or suggested:

- There will not be a shutdown of state government. Some people, he said, would consider a shutdown of state government a good thing. He disagreed. Government, he said, is needed and a shutdown will be averted.
- Solutions to resolving the current fiscal year and the 2008 fiscal year revenue shortfalls will be agreed to.

- Expect some sort of a tax hike to be agreed to at least for the coming fiscal year.
- The House Democratic plan to replace the Single Business Tax has widespread support and will provide the framework for the long-sought after solution to that issue. (The Senate Republicans are balking primarily to maintain leverage to negotiate considerations they want for business.)
- That the governor forgot Politics 101 in announcing her service tax proposal without first lining up support of House Democrats.

And, for the quick-talking radio-television reporter, book author — who also has a newspaper column on the side — that was just to get started.

By all rights, he said, the governor should have lost the election if voting was based on the economy. That she didn't, he said, is in part due to her intelligence, her ability to use the medium of television and perhaps a few moves that outmaneuvered the DeVos camp.

DeVos was first to use television to gain in the race by pouring some \$20 million into television ads beginning eight months before the election. And, Skubick said, DeVos succeeded in gaining ground and even surpassing the govern in the polls based on those emotion- and image-only ads.

"Dick DeVos won the race for governor," Skubick said, "the problem is he did it in June, not November."

[Granholm](#) held onto her campaign money until fall, and then, as the election neared, she used it to tie DeVos to President George W. Bush who's popularity in the polls has been plummeting, and to Amway, the Grand Rapids-based company the DeVos family fortune was made in.

Skubick said the [Granholm](#) campaign knew many people had negative feelings about Amway.

"There was a reservoir of distaste out there, and they played it hard," he said of her tactics.

[Granholm](#) also "played beautifully" the wealth card. She didn't attack DeVos directly about being wealthy, she more subtly made references in debates, such as asking him once when talking about the ship of state, if he, as a "yachtsman," didn't agree with an analogy about the skipper captaining the ship.

"She got the point across," he said.

She also knew that the first debate, moderated by Skubick, played to her strengths since it was a no-holds-barred event she was used to, but that would be new to her opponent.

"She ate him up alive," he said.

The Detroit Tigers may have played a roll, too. Skubick in his book and again Sunday pointed out 1 million Michigan residents watched that first debate. The second debate of three took place on a date selected by the [Granholm](#) people "on purpose" and agreed to by DeVos: It was the night of the opening of the Detroit Tigers playoff run and by comparison only 350,000 people watched. The [Granholm](#) campaign, he said, knew that likely would be the case and they knew also DeVos would be better prepared the second time around. The choice of dates meant 650,000 less people saw him in what many thought was his best performance of the three debates.

"Is that sharp?" he said.

Other Skubick observations:

- That the governor's announcement last week she would cut school aid if an agreement on the budget wasn't forthcoming, was one of necessity, required of her by law — and one that former Gov. [John Engler](#) would have done, too. It also, he said, is a way of getting lawmakers' attention.
- The collective state is in danger of losing in the political/governing process a whole generation of youth, most of whom aren't paying attention. Too often, he said, neither are today's adults. He challenged those present to get their children involved in the governing and political process.
- The media has lost its way. Far too little coverage is given to state politics as consultants have entered the newsroom pushing softer news that sells advertising better.
- He noted that his last speech was before the Grand Traverse County Republicans, so he now was evening that out speaking to a Democratic gathering.
- And, as a bit of pure speculation, what-if kind of thinking, he wondered out loud what would happen if a Democrat wins the Presidency in 2008? Would [Granholm](#), who is term-limited, be tapped for a Cabinet post, say U.S. Attorney General? "She might do

better than the one that's in there," he said to a round of applause. If that were to happen, Lt. Gov. Don Cherry would become governor and run for the seat in 2010 as an incumbent.

He added, he gets a bit uncomfortable when a reporter is in the room when he is speaking and reports that he mentioned such a speculative thing.

sbegnoche@ludingtondailynews.com

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Social Services Office Will Remain in City, Seeks Space

Plans are underway to move the Department of Human Services offices at St. Ignace to cheaper office space within the city, Ken DesArmo, director of the Mackinac County Department of Human Services, told The St. Ignace News Monday, April 23. Mr. DesArmo confirmed that the office would remain in St. Ignace, where he said Human Services helps the largest number of people in Mackinac County.

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The Daily Telegram

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TUESDAY MAY 8, 2007 Last modified: *Monday, May 7, 2007 4:35 PM EDT*

Only one candidate on Tecumseh school ballot

Gary Urban is unopposed in Tuesday's election.

By [David Panian](#)

Daily Telegram Staff Writer

TECUMSEH — Voters in the Tecumseh school district won't have a choice of candidates in Tuesday's election.

Gary Urban, 47, is the lone candidate on the ballot, and no write-in candidates filed declarations of intent by the April 27 deadline. Urban, who has served on committees that reviewed the school district's athletic facilities needs, said he sees the district as growing and evolving with new people moving into the area.

"When this opportunity came up, and I saw they were looking for candidates, I saw this as an opportunity to be involved a little more," he said.

The main issue facing the district is managing the budget, especially in light of possible cuts in state funding, Urban said. If the state reduces its funding, he said, the district will have to look for other revenue sources, perhaps from the private sector.

"We're going to have to look at other revenue," he said. "If we're talking about that massive a cut, you're looking at program cuts."

Gov. Jennifer Granholm has told legislators she will cut \$125 per pupil in funding for the current school year because of revenue shortfalls unless legislators find ways to maintain schools' funding. Karen Donahue, finance director for Tecumseh Public Schools, said she is basing the district's 2007-08 budget on receiving \$6,860 per pupil in state funding, or \$225 less per pupil than the district was to receive this year.

Urban said the district has to be careful when considering whether to cut programs.

"If you make the wrong cuts, people start taking their kids to other schools, so it's kind of a double-whammy," he said.

The proposed bond issue is second in priority to addressing the budget, Urban said. In order to pay for further renovations and new athletics facilities, the bond issue would extend the district's current 7.2-mill property tax, which was passed to pay for the high school construction and renovation of the other schools. He said there is a need to make improvements to the schools and other facilities.

"We need to be looking at informing the public as far as having public forums," he said, explaining that voters sometimes focus in on details — such as whether a new football stadium is needed — and do not consider the entire scope of the proposal.

Urban works as a case manager for the Michigan Department of Human Services office in Washtenaw County and also officiates high school football, basketball and softball. He and his wife, Monique, have one child.

Board president Mark Wolfe and trustee Suzanne Moore opted to not seek re-election for personal reasons. Each has served eight years on the board.

Voting will be from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday at the Tecumseh Community Center, 703 E. Chicago Blvd.

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